



State of North Carolina  
Office of the Governor

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**GOV. EASLEY PLEDGES QUICK ACTION TO HELP TORNADO VICTIMS**  
*Dispatches Assessment Teams To Storm-Ravaged Areas*

**RALEIGH** – Gov. Mike Easley today said the state is taking immediate action to help victims of the tornado that struck the Riegelwood area of Columbus County as well as others who suffered losses from the deadly storm that hammered the state Thursday. Easley took an aerial tour of the area to survey the damage and met with local leaders and emergency response officials.

“I join all North Carolinians in expressing our sympathy to those who lost loved ones in this tragedy and we wish a full and speedy recovery to all who were injured,” Easley said. “I have dispatched teams to assess property damage and provide assistance to those who suffered losses so recovery is not delayed.”

Getting assessment teams to the area is a vital step in the recovery process to determine the extent of damage and the kind of assistance available to help get lives back to normal. Teams have been dispatched to Columbus and Iredell counties and will be sent to other areas at the request of local officials.

Two additional squads of Highway Patrol officers, 16 troopers, have been sent to Columbus County to assist with law enforcement and protect property in the damaged areas. Emergency management coordinators are in place in Columbus County, as well as in Iredell, Lincoln and Rowan counties in the western part of the state.

The tornado killed eight people in Riegelwood in Columbus County and damaged at least 30 homes Thursday. Twenty people remain hospitalized, one from Iredell County. Power and other services have been restored.

For those looking to help the families who have suffered because of the storm, the Community Foundation of Southeastern North Carolina has set up the Riegelwood disaster Relief and Recovery Fund. Tax deductible contributions can be sent to: Community Foundation, 321 North Front Street, Wilmington, NC 28401 or to visit the foundation’s web site at [www.communityfoundationsenc.org](http://www.communityfoundationsenc.org).

The Red Cross and Salvation Army are also accepting donations that should be designated “Riegelwood Tornado.” For information about the recovery or how to donate to the relief efforts, the public can call the Governor’s Emergency Bilingual Hotline, 1-888-835-9966.

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